

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 SS-15 ISO-00 SP-02 INR-10 IO-13  
CPR-01 PA-01 ACDA-12 DODE-00 PM-05 ARA-10 SSO-00  
NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 ( ISO ) W  
-----094726 181356Z /10

O P 180916Z FEB 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7466  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORIT  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ABIDJAN 1690

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PPDC (CARTER, JIMMY - HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, FELIX), IV  
SUBJECT: DELIVERY OF LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CARTER  
TO PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

REF: STATE 42366 (NOTAL)

1. I MET ALONE WITH PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY YESTERDAY  
AFTERNOON AT HIS RESIDENCE IN COCODY AND DELIVERED  
TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER DATED FEBRUARY 10  
AND RECEIVED THIS MORNING.

2. HOUPHOUET READ THE LETTER QUICKLY STRAIGHT THROUGH  
AND ASKED ME TO EXPRESS TO PRESIDENT CARTER HIS APPRECIATION  
FOR THE PRESIDENT'S WILLINGNESS TO SHARE WITH HIM  
AMERICAN VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA  
WHICH WERE OF GREAT CONCERN TO BOTH THE UNITED STATES  
AND THE IVORY COAST. REFERRING TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S  
EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO VISIT  
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THE IVORY COAST DURING HIS FORTHCOMING TRIP TO AFRICA,  
HOUPHOUET SAID THAT, WHILE IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE TO  
WELCOME PRESIDENT CARTER TO THE IVORY COAST AT ANY TIME,  
MARCH WAS GOING TO BE A BUSY MONTH AND HE WAS THEREFORE  
SOMEWHAT RELIEVED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT  
THE INVITATION CONVEYED THROUGH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
PRESIDENT PHILIPPE YACE. HOUPHOUET EXPLAINED THAT HE

WOULD BE VISITING THE CAMEROON FEBRUARY 23 TO MARCH 4, THAT HIS DAUGHTER WAS BEING MARRIED IN YAMOUSSOUKRO ON MARCH 10, THAT HE WOULD BE IN MONROVIA MARCH 16 "TO MEET WITH SEKOU TOURE" (SEPTTEL), AND THAT HE EXPECTED TO TRAVEL TO PARIS IN EARLY APRIL FOR A MEETING OF FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN LEADERS IN THE FRENCH CAPITAL. AFTER THAT, HE SAID, HE EXPECTED TO TAKE A SHORT VACATION IN SWITZERLAND. HOUPHOUET HOPED, THEREFORE, THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD CONSIDER A VISIT TO THE IVORY COAST LATER IN THE YEAR. MEANWHILE, HOUPHOUET WISHED ME TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE WAS DELIGHTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD SOON BE VISITING NIGERIA, A COUNTRY WITH WHICH THE IVORY COAST HAD CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS.

3. HOUPHOUET THEN READ PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE MORE SLOWLY A SECOND TIME, COMMENTING ON PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN. WHEN HE CAME TO THE SENTENCE IN PARA 4 OF THE LETTER, STATING "WE DO NOT QUESTION THE RIGHT OF ETHIOPIA TO CALL FOR ASSISTANCE IN SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST AN ATTACK ON ITS SOIL," HE SAID, "I DON'T AGREE WITH THIS." IN HOUPHOUET'S VIEW, MENGISTU WAS SEEKING SOVIET AND CUBAN ASSISTANCE PRIMARILY TO REINFORCE THE POSITION OF HIS REGIME INTERNALLY AND ONLY SECONDARILY TO EXPEL SOMALI FORCES FROM THE OGADEN. HE DID NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD CONCEDE TO ETHIOPIA THE RIGHT TO INTRODUCE  
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A MASSIVE SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE INTO THE HORN OF AFRICA WITH THE JUSTIFICATION THAT ETHIOPIA WAS SUFFERING "AGRESSION." SOMALIA WAS A SMALL COUNTRY WHICH COULD NOT POSSIBLY CONQUER ETHIOPIA. WHILE THE PRESENCE OF SOMALI UNITS IN THE OGADEN COMPLICATED THE SITUATION THERE, IT DID NOT RPT NOT ALTER THE AFRICAN CHARACTER OF THE CONFLICT. IT WAS THE ETHIOPIANS WHO HAD DONE THIS BY INVITING SOVIET AND CUBAN ASSISTANCE.

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ABIDJAN 1690

4. I POINTED OUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER WENT ON TO SAY THAT WE CONSIDERED SOVIET AND CUBAN SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIA TO BE EXCESSIVE AND BELIEVED THAT IT EXACERBATED THE SITUATION IN THE HORN AND INJECTED INTO AFRICA A FOREIGN MILITARY PRESENCE. PRESIDENT CARTER'S ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION WAS, IT SEEMED TO ME, CLOSE TO HOUPHOUET'S. AS FAR AS ETHIOPIA'S RIGHT TO CALL FOR ASSISTANCE IN SELF-DEFENSE OF ITS TERRITORY, I OBSERVED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR ANY STATE, AFRICAN OR NON-AFRICAN, TO DENY THIS PRINCIPLE. THE IVORY COAST HAD RECENTLY SUPPORTED THE RIGHT OF ZAIRE TO RECEIVE FRENCH AND MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. HOUPHOUET SAID THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH MOBUTU HAD SOUGHT ASSISTANCE FROM THE FRENCH AND MOROCCANS MIGHT APPEAR SIMILAR TO THOSE UNDER WHICH MENGISTU WAS SEEKING ASSISTANCE FROM THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS, BUT HE BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WHICH THE WESTERN STATES SHOULD NOT IGNORE.

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6. "THE FRENCH AND THE MOROCCANS HAVE LEFT ZAIRE," HE SAID. "HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL TAKE FOR THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS TO LEAVE ETHIOPIA?"

7. TURNING THEN TO THE QUESTION OF SOMALI-KENYAN RELATIONS, HOUPHOUET SAID THAT HE WAS PLEASED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER CONSIDERED SIAD BARRE'S WRITTEN COMMITMENT TO A NON-AGGRESSION PACT WITH KENYA TO BE AN ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT. WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY, HOUPHOUET SAID, WE SHOULD TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS DEVELOPMENT BY PERSUADING KEYATTA AND THE KENYANS TO MEET SIAD BARRE HALFWAY. IT APPEARED TO HOUPHOUET THAT THE KENYANS WERE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE SMALL PROBLEM OF SOMALI-KENYAN DIFFERENCES THAT THEY WERE UNDERESTIMATING

THE MUCH MORE DANGEROUS PROBLEM OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN ETHIOPIA. "WE MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE," HOUPHOUET SAID. "KENYATTA IS OLD AND AILING AND TIRED. I HAVE GREAT ESTEEM FOR HIM, BUT IT IS BY NO MEANS CLEAR WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN KENYA AFTER HE GOES." IF THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS HELPED MENGISTU CONSOLIDATE HIS REGIM IN ADDIS, AND IF SIAD BARRE WERE ISOLATED AND PERHAPS DEPOSED, THE NEXT TARGET WOULD BE KENYA. HOUPHOUET WAS CONVINCED THEREFORE THAT IT WAS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO CONVINCE THE KENYANS TO SEIZE THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITY TO NORMALIZE THEIR RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA. THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT HOUPHOUET BELIEVED THE UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN WERE BETTER EQUIPPED TO DO THAN THE IVORY COAST, ALTHOUGH HOUPHOUET WOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP PERSUADE THE KENYANS TO THE BEST OF HIS ABILITY.

8. I SAID THAT IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT WE WERE DISCUSSING WITH THE BRITISH AND WITH OUR OWN EMBASSY IN NAIROBI THE NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN. HOUPHOUET REPEATED THAT DELAY COULD BE RISKY. NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN KENYA AND SOMALIA WOULD BE HELPFUL TO BOTH COUNTRIES AND INDIRECTLY  
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HELPFUL TO THE SITUATION IN THE HORN. PROTRACTED ANIMOSITY AND MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN KENYA AND SOMALIA WOULD ONLY SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE SOVIETS AND THE CUBANS.

9. IN PARTING, HOUPHOUET ASKED ME ONCE AGAIN TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT CARTER HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT'S WILLINGNESS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS FRANKLY ON SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. IT WAS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT HE WISHED ME TO EMPHASIZE HOW DISTURBED HE WAS ABOUT INCREASING SOVIET-CUBAN INFLUENCE IN THE HORN AND ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA.  
STEARNS

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PPDC, IV, (CARTER, JIMMY), (HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY, FELIX)  
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